

whose communication with the Ocean is by Ocracoke Inlet as to the most efficient mode of deepening the Swash, that great impediment to their commercial prosperity.¹⁸ They inclose to you a copy of the resolutions under which they have been appointed and request that you will take the earliest opportunity of calling the attention of your townsmen and of the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns to this very important subject. To prevent delay they suggest the expediency of having a Committee appointed on the part of the Citizens of each place directly interested in this undertaking, and of each Committee delegating two or more of its members to (2) attend a convention at Washington as a central place of meeting on the 25th day of this month with a view to the free interchange of opinions and to the forming of some practicable and united plan of operations—

Very respectfully
Y^r Ob^t Servants
Wm. Gaston
J Burgwyn
Jn^o Snead¹⁹
Moses Jarvis²⁰
Silvester Brown
H. B. Croom²¹

Addressed: John G. Blount Esq
Washington N. C.

¹⁸In 1819 Hamilton Fulton described conditions of navigation around Ocracoke Inlet as follows: "The Navigation off the coast of Ocracoke is dangerous; the channel across the Bar is variable and difficult; within the Bar lies the Swash, over which there are only eight feet of water, and within the Swash there is no harbour, nor good anchorage-ground. . . . This current meeting the current of the tide, forms an eddy within the Bar, in which a deposit is made which forms the Swash. The Inlet has widened very much within the last fifty years, and the depth of water across the Bar has lessened. It is said, that at present this depth does not exceed fourteen feet. Vessels drawing more than eight feet water, have to lighter in crossing the Swash; and this circumstance . . . renders the Navigation through this Inlet not only inconvenient, but often extremely dangerous" (Hoyt, *Papers of Archibald D. Murphey*, II, 125-126).

¹⁹John Snead operated a store across the street from the Bank of New Bern. He is listed in the 1820 census as the head of a household of seven. Miller, *Recollections*, 8; Potter, *1820 North Carolina Census*, Craven County, 31.

²⁰Moses Jarvis owned the shipping firm of Moses Jarvis and Company. He too is listed in the 1820 census for Craven County as the head of a household of seven. Miller, *Recollections*, 10; Potter, *1820 North Carolina Census*, Craven County, 28.

²¹Hardy B. Croom (1798-1837), the son of General William Croom of Lenoir, was a graduate of the University of North Carolina and a noted botanist and scholar. He had read law with William Gaston in New Bern, married a daughter of Nathan Smith of New Bern, and represented Lenoir County in the state Senate in 1828. Croom and his family perished at sea when their ship wrecked off the North Carolina coast during a voyage from New York. Miller, *Recollections*, 50; Ashe, *History of North Carolina*, II, 401; Wheeler, *Historical Sketches*, II, 223.